

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

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R 011235Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9617

S E C R E T NEW DELHI 8748

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, IN

SUBJ: AREAS IN WHICH INDIAN EMERGENCY MAY DIRECTLY AFFECT
INDO-US RELATIONS

1. THERE ARE SEVERAL SPECIFIC RESPECTS IN WHICH THE RECENT
INDIAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL EVENTS MAY DIRECTLY AFFECT INDO-US
RELATIONS, DEPENDING ON OUR RESPONSES. IN THE ORDER OF URGENCY
NUWITH WHICH THEY MAY ARISE WE NOTE THEM AS FOLLOWS:

2. THE PRESS: THE WASHINGTON POST'S LEW SIMONS HAS NOW BEEN
EXPELLED AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT OTHER AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS
MAY ALSO BE FORCED OUT OF INDIA IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS FOR
VIOLATING CENSORSHIP. IT IS ALSO CONCEIVABLE THAT INDIAN
EMPLOYEES OF AMERICAN NEWS MEDIA COULD BE JAILED FOR SIMILAR
REASONS. THE AMERICAN PRESS HERE HAVE ALREADY PRIVATELY ASKED
EMBASSY AND USIS OFFICERS WHAT THE EMBASSY PROPOSES TO DO
ABOUT THIS EVENTUALITY. WE HAVE SAID WE WOULD OF COURSE TAKE
THIS UP WITH THE GOI BUT DID NOT THINK THIS WOULD HAVE ANY
EFFECT. IN FACT, THE DCM LAST WEEK EXPRESSED HIS STRONG MIS-
GIVINGS TO THE FOREIGN SECRETARY ABOUT THE LEW SIMONS
(WASHINGTON POST) CASE AND THE POLCOUNSELOR EXPRESSED STRONG
REGRET TO THE JOINT SECRETARY (AMERICAS) ON SIMONS' EX-
PULSION. BOTH WERE TOLD BLUNTLY THAT THE GOI WOULD ENFORCE
CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS REGARDLESS OF WHAT FOREIGN REACTION
WAS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PROTEST EXPULSIONS. IF THE DEPT

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FINDS IT NECESSARY TO COMMENT PUBLICLY, WE RECOMMEND THAT

COMMENT CONTINUE TO BE LIMITED TO AMERSON AND NESSEN'S STRONG EXPRESSIONS OF REGRET OVER ABBRIDGEMENTS OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PRESS AND THAT THE GENERAL "NO COMMENT" ON THE GENERAL INDIAN DOMESTIC SITUATION WHICH DEPT HAS BEEN FOLLOWING BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO. WE DO NOT SEE HOW WE CAN OURSELVES PROTEST TO THE GOI ABOUT INDIAN CITIZEN EMPLOYEES OF US MEDIA WHO MAY BE SUBJECT TO ARREST, MUCH AS WE MAY PRIVATELY DEPLORE THIS.

3. WE BELIEVE IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE, INDEED PROBABLE, THAT AT LEAST SOME FOREIGN NEWS PUBLICATIONS WILL BE BARRED FROM ENTRY INTO INDIA THIS WEEK. WE HAVE ALREADY HEARD RUMORS THIS WILL EFFECT TIME AND POSSIBLY NEWSWEEK. THE BRITISH WILL BE MONITORING THE ECONOMIST'S ENTRY. THE INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIB, WITH CRITICAL EDITS AND SOME CRITICAL NEWS COVERAGE, IS STILL BEING SOLD ON NEWSTANDS AS OF JUNE 30. WE WOULD NOT PROPOSE TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST BANNING OF FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS ENTERING INDIA.

4. THE SATELLITE INFORMATION TELEVISION EXPERIMENT (SITE) IS TO BE FORMALLY INAUGURATED ON AUGUST 1. WE HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN CONCERNED THAT THE NEWS BROADCASTS WHICH THE GOI IS PLANNING TO BEAM DAILY THROUGH THE SATELLITE SYSTEM COULD INCLUDE TENDENTIOUS MATERIAL. IT IS NOW ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT THE BROADCASTS WILL BE CENSORED NEWS DESIGNED TO BOLSTER THE PM AND GOVT'S POSITION. WE DO NOT BELIEVE AT THIS POINT WE SHOULD TAKE ANY STEPS TO ALTER OUR LONG-STANDING COMMITMENT ON PARTICIPATION IN THE EXPERIMENT. TO DO SO WOULD BE A DRAMATIC AND DEVASTATING BLOW AGAINST INDO-US RELATIONS. NEVERTHELESS WE ARE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE LEVEL AT WHICH WE SHOULD BE REPRESENTED AT THE INAUGURATION. NASA DIRECTOR FLETCHER IS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED TO ATTEND. WE THINK THAT SHOULD BE IT FOR US REPRESENTATION FROM WASHINGTON. AT THIS END, THE QUESTION IS WHETHER THE AMBASSADOR SHOULD PARTICIPATE. WE ARE INCLINED AT THIS POINT TO HOLD UP ON A FIRM DECISION ON THIS FOR THE NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS BUT WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS. THE GOI WILL BE LOOKING FOR SIGNS OF FOREIGN APPROBATION AND "BUSINESS AS USUAL" IN

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THE WEEKS AHEAD. THE BRITISH FOUND THEMSELVES EMBARRASSED IN THE POSITION OF SIGNING AN AID AGREEMENT WITH THE INDIANS LAST WEEKEND WHICH THE GOI FEATURED PROMINENTLY IN THE NEWS. WE MAY OURSELVES WANT TO HANDLE THE SITE OPENING IN AS LOW A KEY AS POSSIBLE.

5. VISITS: WE ARE REVIEWING THE QUESTION OF CONTEMPLATED VISITS BY SEVERAL SENATORS WHO THE AMBASSADOR HAS INVITED TO VISIT

NEW DELHI AND GIVE SPEECHES. OUR INCLINATION AT THIS POINT IS TO HOLD UP ON THESE, AT LEAST IN THE NEXT SIX WEEKS TO TWO MONTHS. SIMILARLY ON VISITS BY OTHER SENIOR USG OFFICIALS AND BY DELEGATIONS OR REPRESENTATIVES OF US BUSINESS WHO MAY BE PLANNING ON HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATIONS WITH GOI OFFICIALS AND POLITICIANS. WE THINK IT IS BEST TO WAIT A BIT AND SEE HOW THE NEXT FEW WEEKS PLAY OUT AND PARTICULARLY HOW GOI ECONOMIC POLICIES DEVELOP BEFORE ENCOURAGING SUCH TRIPS. THERE MAY, OF COURSE, BE RUGENT EXCEPTIONS AND WE WILL WORK WITH THE DEPT IN PLAYING THOSE BY EAR.

6. IN SHORT, WE ARE SUGGESTING A GO-SLOW OPERATION IN TERMS OF PUBLIC VISIBILITY OF INDO-US RELATIONS. WE MAY BE CONFRONTED FAIRLY QUICKLY AFTER AMBASSADOR KAUL'S RETURN TO WASHINGTON THIS WEEK WITH HIS QUERY AS TO SPECIFIC AGREEMENT ON TIMING FOR A MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. TEJA SUGGESTED MID-AUGUST (BEFORE THE LIMA NON-ALIGNED FON MIN CONFERENCE) OR DURING THE UNGA SESSION. AT THIS POINT, WE WOULD SUGGEST DEFERRING SPECIFIC TIMING WHILE AGREEING IN PRINCIPLE TO MEETING IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. OR POSSIBLY EVEN SUGGESTING THAT WE WILL BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH KAUL IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS ON THE WHOLE QUESTION OF A MEETING. THE LATTER MAY MAKE THE INDIANS A BIT EDGY ABOUT WHETHER WE ARE PULLING BACK IN LIGHT OF THE "EMERGENCY" BUT THAT MUCH "EDGE", WE THINK, IS TOLERABLE AS LONG AS THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE IS POSITIVE. WE OF COURSE CAN EXPECT THAT KAUL WILL GO PROMPTLY AS IN THE PAST TO THE INDIAN PRESS IN WASHINGTON WITH WHATEVER ANSWER HE GETS FROM YOU.
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